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NOTES OF AMP MEETING - FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1986

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PARTICIPANTS: Representatives of AMP, BU, The Mercy Fund,
Group W-Westinghouse, MediaPrompt

Acceptance of the revised project will depend on obtaining approval by USIA Director Wick, probably new week. Kent Obee, CPAO Islamabad, will have liaison responsibility for USIA's achieving project objectives in Pakistan. JOT Jim Hoagland, currently in Islamabad, will begin his duties next week as BPAO Peshawar for the Binational Center Director.

SSG explained USIS' overall operations in Islamabad, citing the English Teaching Program, Fulbright Program, and facilitative assistance it provides to foreign journalists and responsibility for explaining the U.S. Government's position as it concerns Pakistan.

He further said the goal of the project is to develop an independent Afghan Media Service administered by Afghans and to train Afghans in this field. Another objective is to increase news information concerning the Afghan situation for world consumption through the medium of journalism and to advance the flow of news information to the international journalistic community. The AMP is the mechanism by which to accomplish this goal.

Starting last year BU had the responsibility for hands-on journalistic training of Afghans in Pakistan for an 18-month period and was to have included two 6-week training sessions within a 6-month period with additional seminars offered during the break period. Grant responsibility included screening of applicants and preparation materials with three people on the ground during the program plus a fourth person. Currently there has been a consolidation for teaching basic communication with a spin-off of 10 people designated as potentially acceptable for video training.

Hearst's responsibility was as organizational director with a three-fold purpose:

- 1) Responsibility for setting up a news service
- 2) Responsibility for the production aspects of producing the news
- 3) Responsibility for developing a market for distribution designed to get the story out to the world audience

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Hearst was initially going to field a senior journalist as advisor to the director of the news service for the full 6-month period. The Government was a key player in the entire program and contacted Afghan resistance organizations asking for candidates with a journalistic background who might be professionally acceptable by the journalistic community.

Sabahuddin Kushkaki, an Afghan citizen, is the primary candidate as director of the news service the AMP is undertaking to build. He was formerly the principal director of the University of Nebraska's grant program funded by National Endowment for Democracy for the setting up schools in Afghanistan and the publishing of text books. He was formerly the founder of the Kabul Times and Minister of Information in a former Pakistan government and was also a VOA consultant with expertise as an editor, management, and journalistic background in the print and other media and is probably the only person with stature, background and the overall ability to succeed in the position. He has to his credit an independent mind and no stomach for being a mere puppet.

In answer to some queries from several of the participants on scuttlebutt that Mr. Kushkaki was not actually considered the prime contender for the position, SSG laid their fears to rest, saying that Mr. Kushkaki had arrived back in Pakistan several days ago and felt he would overcome the problem which appeared to be surfacing.

Mr. Sethi would be the Pakistan Government's liaison with the ANS.

Ron Goldman of BU asked if a decision had been made on where the actual site would be---in Islamabad or Peshawar. SSG replied that the senior person in the foreign ministry preferred that it be Peshawar, while Kushkaki and Sethi want the location to be Islamabad based on security reasons, plus it being the locus for Pakistan TV, foreign embassies, international wire service and foreign journalists. USIS people are opting for Peshawar mainly for the political aspect. Another plus for it being located in Peshawar is the fact that The Mercy Fund's operations there would allow us to use their facilities; this would be a tremendous asset. Ron Goldman felt it would be better to do the video training in Islamabad because of the availability of certain facilities, although he added that locating it in Islamabad would not make it necessarily a better location.

One of the delays in the project was due to the fact that the Government of Pakistan took until late this past summer to come up with their decision, although everything on the U.S. side has been in place and ready to move since March 1.

SSG said that to the best of his knowledge he knew of no obstacle to starting up the project in Pakistan "tomorrow" other than the Government of Pakistan. Mr. Kushkaki had been approved by the GOP and the alliance, and if Kushkaki's goal is realized, we can start up the program in January. Initially a 6-month grant, the GOP and Kushkaki got together and came up with a 12-month budget.

SSG said in a phone call yesterday with the PAO in Islamabad the message came across that we are going to be operating on a reduced scale-type situation.

On the shortfall situation that arose last August, SSG told of USIA's having approached the NSC for additional funding for FY 87. NSC then approached USAID for money. But as of this date, we are still waiting for additional funds. Neither has the congress been very helpful. However there is a bipartisan group that is supportive of our efforts, but we have nothing as yet of a concrete nature. There is, however, a movement afoot to unleash demands for money by several influential solons. P/DH is in constant touch with The Hill.

SSG went into detail on the availability of funds remaining from the Hearst and BU grants and explained the project's new concept involving The Mercy Fund and the German/Afghan Committee. With BU being a grantee, it appears logical they would have the responsibility for explaining the concept of the project as well as broadening the scope of training and getting other elements involved in the program.

BU looks to USIA to carry out the program on a total basis. It is a 3-stage program to start in January, 1987:

- 1) fully government-funded (substantially government-funded) - for the first 6 months;
- 2) second 6 months is partially funded by USIA and partially by the private sector, e.g. The Mercy Fund;
- 3) fully-funded by the private sector.

Suggested budget is \$365,000 with The Mercy Fund contributing 15% (\$54,000.) The measure of control is to be worked out among the participants.

This meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m. with a follow-on meeting at 11:45 p.m. in the office of P/D John Mosher. SSG said that both Mosher and Schneider are supportive of the project, but that it was important for today's participants to make clear their individual contribution to the overall project, to elucidate on the consortium approach and to be prepared to explain what is meant by the control and direction of the project.

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